

## Introduction

Over the past several years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has participated as a member of the National Drinking Water Week Alliance. This group has been responsible for heightening the awareness of drinking water issues during a week long observance, which always falls on the first full week of May. Each year the Alliance has included educational materials for teachers and students to use in the classroom. All are fun activities, but carry a strong message that water needs to be cared for, protected and nurtured, thus the phrase “blue thumb” was born. As the green thumb symbolizes the care of the earth, blue thumb reflects a like commitment to water. Throughout the material that follows, you will see a variety of themes and slogans, but the same idea will emerge: drinking water must be protected. This means we must all support our public water suppliers as they continue to comply with new regulations that will provide a greater degree of public health.

As citizens, we have an integral part in drinking water quality. With the passage of the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, Congress has provided several public right to know provisions that allow citizens to help shape the decisions made about their drinking water. For the first time, users of public water supplies will receive a Consumer Confidence Report, a yearly accounting of the water they drink. You can find out more about what you can do by visiting our website: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/> or by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

EPA is only one of several organizations that have made this material available to you to further your knowledge of drinking water issues. Current Alliance Partners include: the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service; the National Drinking Water Clearing House; the American Water Works Association; and Environment Canada. Contributing partners include: The Ground Water Foundation; Groundwater Trust; WaterCan; the National Association of Water Companies; the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies; the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators; the League of Women Voters; National Geographic; the Water Education Foundation; and the American Library Association.

### *Intended Use of Materials*

Teachers: Materials will provide additional information and classroom activities to enhance any drinking water curriculum you teach.

Students: Easy to duplicate student activity sheets to further the message and stimulate thought.

Parents: As that time of year approaches, students, teachers and parents all share in a responsibility to develop a science project that will provoke thought, encourage research, and provide a scientific approach to answering a question. A science demonstration projects section has been added with ideas to build on or use as presented.

General Information: All users of these materials will find water tips, facts, myths, and trivia to further their awareness of drinking water issues across the Nation.

We hope that you will use these materials to educate yourself and those you come in contact with, not only in a classroom situation, but anywhere the message should be heard.